

sel Peart points out, physicians, because of their confidential relations with patients, are frequently consulted by the latter with reference to the making of their wills; and it is often necessary for a physician to suggest that a patient get his earthly affairs in order. For these reasons, as well as for the personal information of members of the Association, it is hoped that the advice given by Mr. Peart will be found of value. The article referred to appears in this issue, page 20.

General Counsel Peart was for many years the inheritance tax attorney for the treasurer of the city and county of San Francisco, and thereafter special counsel for the state controller in a number of leading cases involving inheritance tax due to the state of California; including the estate of the late cattle baron, Henry Miller, in which an inheritance tax of over two million dollars was paid, after years of legal proceedings spent in determining and fixing the tax. The administration of the Inheritance Tax Act of California is directed to the fixing and assessing of such tax on the interests and property which pass from a decedent by reason of his death.

Singularly enough, the case of John Brown, mentioned in the article above referred to, pertains to a member of a doctor's family; and an inquiry sent by the editor to the general counsel concerning some features of that estate, resulted in a suggestion that the article be written.

DECREASED BUDGET OF STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

Dismissal on July 1 of some of the technically trained personnel of the California Department of Public Health, with the probability that some of the smaller full-time county health units will have to be abandoned, was recently announced by Dr. John H. Graves, president of the State Board of Public Health.

This action, Dr. Graves said, has become necessary as the result of a 20 per cent reduction made by the legislature to a budget which the department had previously reduced by 25 per cent.

Notices of their separation from the service have been given to a number of the department's employees; in the classifications that include pediatrician, public health nurse, sanitary engineer, bacteriologist, rodent hunters (bubonic plague) and stenographers.

On a coöperative basis, the state and federal public health departments have contributed toward maintenance of some of the California full-time health units. These funds have been matched by the Rockefeller Foundation. This financial support by state and federal governments is being withdrawn, which means there will be no further contributions from the Rockefeller Foundation. Unless the counties can raise their own funds—and they report this will not be possible—full-time health units which have been receiving this aid necessarily will be obliged to revert to their former status, with part-time health officers.

"The entire budget of the State Department of Public Health," Doctor Graves said, "was slaugh-

tered by the so-called economy bloc in the legislature. The total appropriation allowed by the legislature is so small—representing a 45 per cent reduction over the present biennium—that some of our bureaus have been seriously crippled.

"Child Hygiene, in which field much of our program of prevention lies, has little left—a bureau chief, a stenographer, a part-time public health nurse.

"The field worker in the Bureau of Tuberculosis has been removed. Previously, our motor clinic and its personnel had to be discontinued. This entire bureau now consists of two persons—the chief and a clerk.

"All of the work that lies ahead of us, not only for the prevention of tuberculosis, particularly in children, but for the prevention and control of other communicable diseases, and for public health work in general, is in jeopardy. Public health in California, I am afraid, will run to a low ebb unless the legislature, in the July session, restores some of our funds."

Attention is called to the above, so that the physicians of California may better understand the new regulations which, under these conditions, must come into operation.

The State Board of Health suggested to the legislature that if the state tuberculosis subsidy to counties (\$3 per week per patient in county sanatoria measuring up to proper state standards) was reduced to a \$2 basis, the saving to the state treasury would have amounted to something like \$162,000 per year; and that if the sum so saved could have been allocated to the State Board of Health, none of the essential bureaus or activities of the State Board of Health would have been jeopardized.

It is unfortunate that the budget revision committees of the legislature failed to visualize the importance of the public health work of California; and that in the effort to create a balanced budget, the blue pencil method of reduction should have been followed. It is hoped that in the postponed July session of the legislature, this budget will be reconsidered. Physicians who are interested in these public health activities should contact their local legislators during the recess, which ends on July 17, in the hope of securing a reconsideration of these matters when the legislature again convenes.

EDITORIAL COMMENT*

MEDIASTINAL PLEURISY

Mediastinal pleurisy is an inflammation of the pleura covering the mesial side of the lung and the lateral surface of the mediastinum. Not until there is encysted fluid between these surfaces are

* This department of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE presents editorial comment by contributing members on items of medical progress, science and practice, and on topics from recent medical books or journals. An invitation is extended to all members of the California and Nevada Medical Associations to submit brief editorial discussions suitable for publication in this department. No presentation should be over five hundred words in length.